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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	EB-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00	OIC-00	PA-00
	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	FMP-00	OCA-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00
	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W			

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2263
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE
WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS GABORONE 001002

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

AF/S FOR MUNCY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BC](#) [SAN](#) [CKGR](#)
SUBJECT: SAN DISPUTE ALLEGED LINK BETWEEN DIAMONDS AND
RELOCATION IN BOTSWANA

REFERENCE: GABORONE 913

1. (U) SUMMARY: The Working Group on Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA), which represents San communities in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Angola, has spurned the argument that plans to mine diamonds prompted relocations from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). WIMSA asked British NGO Survival International (SI), which has attacked the Government of Botswana's policies regarding the San, to cease its campaign unless it agrees to coordinate its message with San organizations. This statement, and the support for it by other groups working with the San, exposes as dubious SI's claims that an intention to mine diamonds motivated the relocation and indicates that San groups hope to revive dialogue with the GOB to improve their situation. END SUMMARY

WIMSA REBUFFS SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

2. (SBU) WIMSA asked SI to halt its advocacy campaign on behalf of the San until such time as SI is prepared to coordinate its message with San organizations. WIMSA observed that SI was not mandated to speak for the San and that the San of southern Africa "do not want to close the door to negotiations with the Government of Botswana." The group expressed particular concern that SI is focusing attention on the dubious claim that an intention to mine diamonds within the CKGR led the Government of Botswana to relocate its residents to settlements outside the Reserve. WIMSA went on to describe diamond mining as an opportunity to further support rural development in Botswana. The statement explained that the San would like to enjoy the advantages of their traditional way of life while having access to modern facilities in villages and towns.

3. (SBU) In a July 13 conversation with PolOff, Matambo (uses first name only) of WIMSA/Botswana explained that public jousting between SI and De Beers had forced his organization's hand. He explained that SI had recently approached the National Museum of History in London to alter an exhibit about diamond mining in southern Africa to include content about its social costs, particularly about the relocation from the CKGR. When the Museum balked, SI staged a protest. De Beers, which had contributed to the exhibit, then issued a press statement describing how diamond mining has benefited the people of southern Africa. According to Matambo, the corporation's statement indicated that groups representing the San subscribed to this argument and specifically named WIMSA among others. As a result, he said, WIMSA decided to issue the statement described above.

OTHER NGOS SUPPORT WIMSA'S STATEMENT

4. (SBU) Bram Leroux, of the Kuru family of San organizations, told PolOff on June 20 that he had been engaged in an ongoing e-mail correspondence with Mr. Stephen Corry at SI over the wisdom and honesty of focusing on diamond mining as a causal factor behind the relocation. Mr. Leroux shared with PolOff his frustration that SI's approach was "all about marketing" the plight of the San to potential supporters and donors. Leroux suggested that most of the San and their advocates in Botswana disagreed with the strategy of trying to connect the relocation with diamond mining.

15. (SBU) Alice Mogwe of the Botswana Center for Human Rights (also known as Ditshwanelo) told PolOff that a group of organizations working with the San had met two weeks ago to discuss ways to refocus attention away from the fight over diamonds and onto development. She said that they also discussed how to revive negotiations with the Government, which other groups except for First People of the Kalahari, advocated. Officially, the GOB has declined to enter into such talks while the matter is before the High Court.

FIRST PEOPLE OF THE KALAHARI SI'S ONLY LOCAL ALLY

16. (U) First People of the Kalahari (FPK) appears to have been further isolated in its alliance with SI by this development. Since SI is funding FPK's court case challenging the relocation, it is unlikely to break that connection. The price of this support, however, is likely to be the marginalization of FPK in any post-trial efforts to advocate effectively on behalf of the San.

COMMENT

17. (SBU) The GOB will be most satisfied to see its arch-

antagonist Survival International rebuffed by the very people it claims to represent. This statement by WIMSA, which is supported by other groups working with the San such as Kuru and Ditshwanelo, exposes as dubious SI's claims that the CKGR relocation policy was driven by the intention to mine diamonds there. By publicly rejecting SI's arguments, WIMSA has preserved the possibility of playing an active role in any revived negotiations between San representatives and the Government. Embassy views this as more constructive than the confrontational and distorted approach of SI, which even FPK's Roy Sesana criticized in the past.

HUGGINS

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